A PLAIN

ACCOUNT

OF

Genuine Chriſtianity.

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A PLAIN

ACCOUNT, &c.

WE have been long diſputing about CHRISTIANS, about CHRISTIANITY, and the EVIDENCE whereby it is ſupported. But what do theſe terms mean? Who is a chriſtian indeed? What is real, genuine chriſtianity? And what is the ſureſt and moſt acceſſible evidence (if I may ſo ſpeak) whereby I may know, that it is of God? May the God of the chriſtians enable me to ſpeak on theſe heads, in a manner ſuitable to the importance of them.

Sect. I. 1. I would conſider, firſt, who is a chriſtian indeed? What does that term properly imply? It has been ſo long abuſed, I fear, not only to mean nothing at all, but, what was far worſe than nothing, to be a cloak for the vileſt hypocriſy, for the groſſeſt abominations and immoralities of every kind, that it is high time to reſcue it out of the hands of wretches that are a reproach to human nature: to ſhew determinately, what manner of man he is, to whom this name of right belongs.

2. A chriſtian cannot think of the author of his being, without abaſing himſelf before him: without a deep ſenſe of the diſtance between a worm of earth and him that ſitteth on the circle of the heavens. In his preſence he ſinks into

the duſt, knowing himſelf to be leſs than nothing in his eye: and being conſcious, in a manner words cannot expreſs, of his own littleneſs, ignorance, fooliſhneſs. So that he can only cry out, from the fulneſs of his heart, "O God! what is man! What am I!"

3. He has a continual ſenſe of his dependence on the parent of good, for his being, and all the bleſſings that attend it. To him he refers every natural, and every moral endowment, with all that is commonly aſcribed either to fortune, or to the wiſdom, courage, or merit of the poſſeſſor. And hence he acquieſces in whatſoever appears to be his will, not only with patience, but with thankfulneſs. He willingly reſigns all he is, all he has, to his wiſe and gracious diſpoſal. The ruling temper of his heart, is, the moſt abſolute ſubmiſſion, and the tendereſt gratitude to his ſovereign benefactor. And this grateful love creates filial fear: and awful reverence toward him; and an earneſt care not to give place to any diſpoſition, not to admit an action, word or thought, which might in any degree diſpleaſe that indulgent power, to whom he owes his life, breath, and all things.

4. And as he has the ſtrongeſt affection for the fountain of all good, ſo he has the firmeſt confidence in him: a confidence which neither pleaſure nor pain, neither life nor death can ſhake. But yet this, far from creating ſloth or indolence, puſhes him on to the moſt vigorous induſtry. It cauſes him to put forth all his ſtrength, in obeying him in whom he confides. So that he is never faint in his mind, never weary of doing whatever he believes to be his will. And as he knows, the moſt acceptable worſhip of God, is to imitate him he worſhips,

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ſo he is continually labouring to tranſcribe into himſelf, all his imitable perfections: in particular, his juſtice, mercy, and truth, ſo eminently diſplayed in all his creatures.

5. Above all, remembering that God is love, he is conformed to the ſame likeneſs. He is full of love, to his neighbour: of univerſal love: not confined to one ſect or party; not reſtrained to thoſe who agree with him in opinions, or in outward modes of worſhip; or to thoſe who are allied to him by blood, or recommended by nearneſs of place. Neither does he love thoſe only that love him, or that are indeared to him by intimacy of acquaintance. But his love reſembles that of him whoſe mercy is over all his works. It ſoars above all theſe ſcanty bounds; embracing neighbours and ſtrangers, friends and enemies: yea, not only the good and gentle. but alſo the froward; the evil and unthankful. For he loves every ſoul that God has made; every child of man, of whatever place or nation. And yet univerſal benevolence does in no wiſe interfere with a peculiar regard for his relations, friends and benefactors: a fervent love for his country: and the moſt indeared affection to all men of integrity, of clear and generous virtue.

6. His love, as to theſe, ſo to all mankind, is itſelf generous and diſintereſted; ſpringing from no view of advantage to himſelf, from no regard to profit or praiſe; no, nor even the pleaſure of loving. This is the daughter, not the parent of his affection. By experience he knows, that ſocial love (if it means the love of our neighbour) is abſolutely, eſſentially different from ſelf love, even of the moſt allowable kind. And yet it is ſure, that, if they are under due regulations, each will give

additional force to the other, till they mix together, never to be divided.

7. And this univerſal, diſintereſted love, is productive of all right affections. It is fruitful of gentleneſs, tenderneſs, ſweetneſs; of humanity, courteſy, and affability. It makes a chriſtian rejoice in the virtues of all, and bear a part in their happineſs; at the ſame time that he ſympathizes with their pains, and compaſſionates their infirmities. It creates modeſty, condeſcenſion, prudence, together with calmneſs and evenneſs of temper. It is the parent of generoſity, openneſs, and frankneſs void of jealouſy and ſuſpicion. It begets candour, and willingneſs to believe and hope whatever is kind and friendly of every man; and invincible patience, never overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good.

8. The ſame love conſtrains him to converſe, not only with a ſtrict regard to truth, but with artleſs ſincerity and genuine ſimplicity, as one in whom there is no guile. And not content with abſtaining from all ſuch expreſſions as are contrary to juſtice or truth, he endeavours to refrain from every unloving word, either to a preſent or of an abſent perſon: in all his converſation aiming at this, either to improve himſelf in knowledge or virtue, or to make thoſe whom he converſes ſome way wiſer, or better, or happier than they were before.

9. The ſame love is productive of all right actions. It leads him into an earneſt and ſteady diſcharge of all ſocial offices, of whatever is due to relations of every kind: to his friends, to his country, and to any particular community whereof he is a member. It prevents his willingly hurting or grieving any man. It guides him into an uniform practice of juſtice and mercy,

mercy, equally extenſive with the principle whence it flows. It conſtrains him to do all poſſible good, of every poſſible kind, to all men; and makes him invariably reſolved, in every circumſtance of life, to do that, and that only, to others, which ſuppoſing he were himſelf in the ſame ſituation, he would deſire they ſhould do to him.

10. And as he is eaſy to others, ſo he is eaſy in himſelf. He is free from the painful ſwellings of pride, from the flames of anger, from the impetuous guſts of irregular ſelf-will. He is no longer tortured with envy or malice, or with unreaſonable or hurtful deſires. He is no more enſlaved to the pleaſures of ſenſe, but has the full power both over his mind and body, in a continued chearful courſe of ſobriety, of temperance and chaſtity. He knows how to uſe all things in their place, and yet is ſuperior to them all. He ſtands above thoſe low pleaſures of imagination, which captivate vulgar minds, whether ariſing from what mortals term greatneſs or novelty, or beauty. All theſe too he can taſte, and ſtill look upward; ſtill aſpire to nobler enjoyments. Neither is he a ſlave to fame: popular breath affects not him; he ſtands ſteady, and collected in himſelf.

11. And he who ſeeks no praiſe, cannot fear diſpraiſe. Cenſure gives him no uneaſineſs; being conſcious to himſelf, that he would not willingly offend, and that he has the approbation of the Lord of all. He cannot fear want; knowing in whoſe hand is the earth and the fulneſs thereof, and that it is impoſſible for him to with-hold, from one that fears him, any manner of thing that is good. He cannot fear pain, knowing it will never be ſent, unleſs it be for his

his real advantage; and that then his ſtrength will be proportioned to it, as it has always been in times paſt. He cannot fear death being able to truſt him he loves, with his ſoul as well as his body; yea, glad to leave the corruptible body in the duſt, till it is raiſed incorruptible and immortal. So that in honour or ſhame, in abundance or want, in eaſe or pain, in life or death, always and in all things he has learned to be content, to be eaſy, thankful, joyful, happy.

12. He is happy in knowing there is a God, an intelligent cauſe and Lord of all, and that he is not the produce either of blind chance or inexorable neceſſity. He is happy in the full aſſurance he has, that this creator and end of all things, is a being of boundleſs wiſdom, of infinite power to execute all the deſigns of his wiſdom, and of no leſs infinite goodneſs to direct all his power to the advantage of all his creatures. Nay, even the conſideration of his immutable juſtice, rendered to all their due, of his unſpotted holineſs, of his all ſufficiency in himſelf, and of that immenſe ocean of all perfections, which center in God from eternity to eternity, is a continual addition to the happineſs of a chriſtian.

13. A farther addition is made thereto, while, in contemplating even the things that ſurround him, that thought ſtrikes warmly upon his heart:

"*Theſe are thy glorious works, parent of good.*" While he takes knowledge of the inviſible things of God, even his eternal power and wiſdom in the things that are ſeen, the heavens, the earth, the fowls of the air, the lillies of the field. How much more, while rejoicing in the conſtant care which he ſtill takes of the work of his own hand,

"O Lord,

"O Lord, our governor! how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Thou haſt ſet thy glory above the heavens!" While he, as it were ſees the Lord ſitting upon his throne, and ruling all things well: while he obſerves the general providence of God ſo extended with his whole creation, and ſurveys all the effects of it in the heavens and earth, as a well pleaſed ſpectator; while he ſees the wiſdom and goodneſs of his general government deſcending to every particular; ſo preſiding over the whole univerſe, as over a ſingle perſon; ſo watching over every ſingle perſon, as if he were the whole univerſe. How does he exult, when he reviews the various traces of the Almighty goodneſs, in what has befallen himſelf, in the ſeveral circumſtances and changes of his own life! All which, he now ſees, have been allotted to him and dealt out, in number, weight, and meaſure. With what triumph of ſoul, in ſurveying either the general or particular providence of God, does he obſerve every line pointing out an hereafter, every ſcene opening into eternity!

14. He is peculiarly and inexpreſſibly happy, in the cleareſt and fulleſt conviction, "This all powerful, all wiſe, all gracious being, this governor of all, loves ME. This lover of my ſoul is always with me, is never abſent, no not for a moment. And I love him; there is none in heaven but thee, none on earth that I deſire beſide thee; and he has given me to reſemble himſelf. He has ſtamped his image on my heart. And I live unto him; I do only his will; I glorify him with my body and my ſpirit. And it will not be long before I ſhall die unto him; I ſhall die into the arms of God. And then

then farewel ſin and pain; then it only remains, that I ſhould live with him for ever."

15. This is the plain, naked portraiture of a chriſtian; be not prejudiced againſt him for his name. Forgive his particularities of opinion and (what you think) ſuperſtitious modes of worſhip. Theſe are circumſtances but of ſmall concern; and do not enter into the eſſence of his character. Cover them with a veil of love, and look at the ſubſtance; his tempers, his holineſs, his happineſs.

Can calm reaſon conceive either a more amiable or a more deſirable character?

Is it your own? Away with names! Away with opinions! I care not what you are called. I aſk not (it does not deſerve a thought) what opinion you are of; ſo you are conſcious to yourſelf, that you are the man, whom I have been (however faintly) deſcribing. Do not you know, you ought to be ſuch? Is the governor of the world well pleaſed that you are not?

Do you (at leaſt) deſire it? I would to God that deſire may penetrate your inmoſt ſoul; and that you may have no reſt in your ſpirit, till you are not only almoſt but altogether a chriſtian!

Sect. II. 1. The ſecond point to be conſidered is, what is real genuine chriſtianity? Whether we ſpeak of it as a principle in the ſoul, or as a ſcheme or ſyſtem of doctrine.

Chriſtianity, taken in the latter ſenſe, is, that ſyſtem of doctrine, which deſcribes the character above recited; which promiſes, it ſhall be mine, (provided I will not reſt till I attain) and which tells me, how I may attain it.

2. Firſt, It deſcribes this character in all its parts, and that in the moſt lively and affecting manner. The main lines of this picture are beautifully

beautifully drawn in many paſſages of the Old Teſtament. Theſe are filled up in the New, retouched and finiſhed with all the art of God.

The ſame we have in miniature more than once. Particularly in the thirteenth chapter of the former epiſtle to the Corinthians, and in that diſcourſe which St. Matthew records as delivered by our Lord, at his entrance upon his public miniſtry.

3. Secondly, Chriſtianity promiſes this character ſhall be mine, if I will not reſt till I attain it. This is promiſed both in the Old Teſtament and in the New. Indeed the new is, in effect, all a promiſe: ſeeing every deſcription of the ſervants of God mentioned therein, has the nature of a command: in conſequence of thoſe general conjunctions, * "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Chriſt: † Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes." And every command has the force of a promiſe; in virtue of thoſe general promiſes; * "A new heart will I give you, and I will put my ſpirit within you: and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments and do them. † This is the covenant that I will make after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts." Accordingly, when it is ſaid, † Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind;" it is not only a direction, what I ſhall do; but a promiſe of what God will do in me; exactly equivalent with what is written elſewhere, § "The

* Cor. xi. † Heb. vi. 12. * Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. † Heb. viii. 10. † Matt. xxii. 37. § Deut. xxx. 6.

"The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, "and the heart of thy seed" (alluding to the custom then in use) "to love the Lord thy God, with all "thine heart, and with all thy soul."

4. This being observed, it will readily appear to every serious person, who reads the New Testament with that care, which the importance of the subject demands, that every particular branch of the preceding character is manifestly promised therein: either explicitly, under the very form of a promise, or virtually, under that of a description or command.

5. Christianity tells me, in the third place, how I may attain the promise, namely, by faith.

But what is faith? Not an opinion, no more than it is a form of words: not any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more christian faith, than a string of beads is christian holiness.

It is not an assent to any opinion, or any number of opinions. A man may assent to three, or three and twenty: he may assent to all the Old and New Testament (at least as far as he understands them) and yet have no christian faith at all.

6. The faith by which the promise is attained, is represented by christianity, as a power wrought by the Almighty in an immortal spirit, inhabiting an house of clay, to see through that veil into the world of spirits, into things invisible and eternal: a power to discern those things which the eyes of flesh and blood of no man have seen or can see: either by reason of their nature, which (though they surround us on every side) is not perceivable by these gross senses: or by reason

reaſon of their diſtance, as being yet afar off, in the boſom of eternity.

7. This is chriſtian faith in the general notion of it. In its more particular notion it is, A divine evidence or conviction wrought in my heart, that God is reconciled to me through his Son: inſeparably joined with a confidence in him, as a gracious, reconciled Father, as for all things ſo eſpecially for all thoſe good things which are inviſible and eternal.

To believe (in the chriſtian ſenſe) is then, to walk in the light of eternity: and to have a clear ſight of, and confidence in the moſt High, reconciled to me, through the Son of his love.

8. Now, how highly deſirable is ſuch a faith, were it only on its own account? For how little does the wiſeſt of men know, of any thing more than he can ſee with his eyes? What clouds and darkneſs cover the whole ſenſe of things inviſible and eternal? What does he know even of himſelf as to his inviſible part? What of his future manner of exiſtence? How melancholy an account does the prying learned philoſopher, (perhaps the wiſeſt and beſt of all heathens) the great venerable Marcus Antoninus give of theſe things? What was the reſult of all his ſerious reſearches? Of his high and deep contemplation? "Either diſſipation (of the ſoul as well as the body, into the common, unthinking maſs) or re-abſorpation into the univerſal fire, the unintelligent ſource of all things: or, ſome unknown manner of conſcious exiſtence, after the body ſinks to riſe no more." One of theſe three he ſuppoſed muſt ſucceed death; but which he had no light to determine. Poor Antoninus! With all his wealth, his honour, his power, with all his wiſdom and philoſophy!

" What points of knowledge did he gain?
That life is ſacred all—and vain?
Sacred how high? and vain how low?
He could not tell—but died to know."

9. He died to know! and ſo muſt you; unleſs you are now a partaker of chriſtian faith. O conſider this. Nay, and conſider, not only how little you know of the immenſity of the things that are beyond ſenſe and time, but how uncertainly do you know even that little? How faintly glimmering a light is that you have? Can you properly be ſaid to know any of theſe things? Is that knowledge any more than bare conjecture? And the reaſon is plain. You have no ſenſes ſuited to inviſible or eternal objects. What *deſiderata* then, eſpecially to the rational, the reflecting part of mankind are theſe? A more extenſive knowledge of things inviſible and eternal. A greater certainty in whatever knowledge of them we have: and, in order to both, faculties capable of diſcerning things inviſible.

10. Is it not ſo? Let impartial reaſon ſpeak. Does not every thinking man want a window, not ſo much in his neighbour's, as in his own breaſt? He wants an opening there, of whatever kind, that might let in light from eternity. He is pained to be thus feeling after God, ſo darkly, ſo uncertainly: to know ſo little of any beſide material objects. He is concerned, that he muſt ſee even that little not directly, but in dim, ſulled glaſs of ſenſe: and conſequently to imperfectly and obſcurely, that it is all a mere ænigma ſtill.

11. Now theſe very deſiderate faith ſupplies. It gives a more extenſive knowledge of things inviſible,

inviſible, ſhewing what eye had not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither could it before enter into our heart to conceive. And all theſe it ſhews in the cleareſt light, with the fulleſt certainty and evidence. For it does not leave us to receive our notions of them, by mere reflection from the dull glaſs of ſenſe: but reſolves a thouſand ænigmas of the higheſt concern, by giving faculties ſuited to things inviſible. Oh! Who would not wiſh for ſuch a faith, were it only on theſe accounts: how much more, if by this I may receive the promiſe, I may attain all holineſs and happineſs?

12. So chriſtianity tells me: and ſo I find it, may every real chriſtian ſay: I now am aſſured, that theſe things are ſo: I experienced them in my own breaſt. What chriſtianity (conſidered as a doctrine) promiſed, is accompliſhed in my ſoul. And chriſtianity, conſidered as an inward principle is the completion of all thoſe promiſes. It is holineſs and happineſs, the image of God impreſſed on a created ſpirit: a fountain of peace and love ſpringing up into everlaſting life.

Sect. III. 1. And this I conceive to be the ſtrongeſt evidence of the truth of chriſtianity. I do not undervalue traditional evidence. Let it have its place and its due honour. It is highly ſerviceable in its kind, and its degree. And yet I cannot ſet it on a level with this.

It is generally ſuppoſed, that traditional evidence is weakened by length of time; as it muſt neceſſarily paſs through ſo many hands, in a continual ſucceſſion of ages. But no length of time can poſſibly effect the ſtrength of this internal evidence. It is equally ſtrong, equally new, through the courſe of ſeventeen hundred years.

It paſſeth now, even as it has done from the beginning, directly from God into the believing ſoul. Do you ſuppoſe time will ever dry up this ſtream? O no, It ſhall never be cut off.

Labitur & labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

2. Traditional evidence is of an extremely complicated nature, neceſſarily including ſo many, and ſo various conſiderations, that only men of ſtrong and clear underſtanding can be ſenſible of its full force. On the contrary, how plain and ſimple is this? And how level to the loweſt capacity? Is not this the ſum? "One thing I know: I was blind: but I now ſee." An argument ſo plain, that a peaſant, a woman, a child may feel its force.

3. The traditional evidence of chriſtianity ſtands as it were a great way off; and therefore although it ſpeaks loud and clear, yet makes a lively impreſſion. It gives us an account of what was tranſacted long ago, in far diſtant times as well as places. It is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, if thou believeſt in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. This then is the record, this is, the evidence, emphatically ſo called, That God hath given unto us eternal life: And this life is in his Son.

4. If then it were poſſible (which I conceive it is not) to ſhake the traditional evidence of chriſtianity, ſtill he that has the internal evidence (and every true believer hath the witneſs or evidence in himſelf) would ſtand firm and unſhaken. Still he could ſay to thoſe who were ſtriking at the external evidence, "Beat on the ſack of Anaxagoras." But you can no more hurt my evidence of chriſtianity, than the tyrant could hurt the ſpirit of that wiſe man

5. I have ſometimes been almoſt inclined to believe, that the wiſdom of God has in moſt latter

latter ages, permitted the external evidence of chriſtianity to be more or leſs clogged and encumbered, for this very end, that men (of reflection eſpecially) might not altogether reſt there, but be conſtrained to look into themſelves alſo, and attend to the light ſhining into their hearts.

Nay, it ſeems (if it be allowed for us to pry ſo far into the reaſons of the divine diſpenſations) that particular in this age, God ſuffers all kinds of objections to be raiſed againſt the traditional evidence of chriſtianity, that men of underſtanding, though unwilling to give it up, yet, at the ſame time they defend this evidence, may not reſt the whole ſtrength of their cauſe thereon, but have a deeper and firmer ſupport for it.

6. Without this, I cannot but doubt, whether they can long maintain their cauſe: whether, if they do not obey the loud call of God, and lay more ſtreſs, than they have hitherto done, on this internal evidence of chriſtianity, they will not, one after another, give up the external, and (in heart at leaſt) go over to thoſe whom they are now contending with: ſo that in a century or two, the people of England will be fairly divided into real deiſts, and real chriſtians.

And I apprehend this would be no loſs at all, but rather an advantage to the chriſtian cauſe: nay, perhaps it would be the ſpeedieſt, yea the only effectual way, of bringing all reaſonable deiſts to be chriſtians.

7. May I be permitted to ſpeak freely? May I, without offence, aſk, of you that are called chriſtians, what real loſs would you ſuſtain, in giving up your preſent opinion, that the chriſtian ſyſtem is of God? Though you bear the name, you are not chriſtians now: you have neither chriſtian faith nor love. You have no divine

divine evidence of things unſeen: you have not entered into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus. You do not love God with all your heart: neither do you love your neighbour as yourſelf. You are neither happy nor holy. You have not learned in every ſtate therewith to be content: to rejoice evermore, even in want, pain, death; and in every thing to give thanks. You are not holy in heart; ſuperior to pride, to anger, to fooliſh deſires. Neither are you holy in life: you do not walk as Chriſt alſo walked. Does not the main of your chriſtianity lie in your opinion? Decked with a few outward obſervances? For as to morality, even honeſt heathen morality, (O let me utter a melancholy truth) many of thoſe whom you ſtile deiſts, there is reaſon to fear, have far more of it than you.

8. Go on, gentlemen, and proſper. Shame theſe nominal chriſtians out of that poor ſuperſtition which they call Chriſtianity. Reaſon, rally, laugh them out of their dead, empty forms, void of ſpirit, of faith. In love conceive them, that ſuch unmeaning pageantry (for ſuch it manifeſtly is, if there is nothing in the heart correſpondent with the outward ſhew) is abſolutely unworthy, you need not ſay of God, but even of any man that is endued with common underſtanding. Shew them, that while they are endeavouring to pleaſe God thus, they are only beating the air. Know your time! preſs on; puſh your victory, till you have conquered all that know not God. And then he whom neither they nor you know now, ſhall ariſe and gird himſelf with ſtrength, and go forth in his Almighty love, and ſweetly conquer you all together.

9. O that

9. O that the time were come! How do I long for you to be partakers of the exceeding great and precious promiſes! How am I pained when I hear any of you uſing thoſe ſilly terms, which the men of form have taught you, calling the mentioning of the holy thing you want, CANT! the deepeſt wiſdom, the higheſt happineſs, ENTHUSIASM! What ignorance is this? How extremely deſpicable would it make you in the eyes of any but a chriſtian? But he cannot deſpiſe you, who loves you as his own ſoul, who is ready to lay down his life for your ſake.

10. Perhaps you will ſay, "But this internal evidence of chriſtianity affects only thoſe in whom the promiſe is fulfilled. It is no evidence to me." There is truth in this objection. It does affect them chiefly: but it does not affect them only. It cannot, in the nature of things, be ſo ſtrong an evidence to others, as it is to them. And yet it may bring a degree of evidence, it may reflect ſome light on you alſo.

For, firſt, you ſee the beauty and lovelineſs of chriſtianity, when it is rightly underſtood. And you are ſure there is nothing to be deſired in compariſon of it.

Secondly, you know the ſcriptures promiſes this, and ſays, it is attained by faith, and by no other way.

Thirdly, you ſee clearly how deſirable chriſtian faith is, even on account of its own intrinſic value.

Fourthly, you are a witneſs that the holineſs and happineſs above deſcribed can be attained no other way. The more you have laboured after virtue and happineſs, the more convinced you are of this. Thus far then you need not lean

lean upon other men: thus far you have perſonal experience.

Fifthly, what reaſonable aſſurance can you have of things, whereof you have not perſonal experience? Suppoſe the queſtion were, can the blind be reſtored to ſight? This you have not yourſelf experienced? How then will you know that ſuch a thing ever was? Can there be an eaſier or ſurer way than to walk with one or ſome number of men who were blind, but are now reſtored to ſight! They cannot be deceived as to the fact in queſtion; the nature of the thing leaves no room for this. And if they are honeſt men (which you may learn from other circumſtances) they will not deceive you.

Now transfer this to the caſe before us; and thoſe who were blind, but now ſee, thoſe who were ſick many years, but now are healed, thoſe who were miſerable, but now are happy, will afford YOU alſo a very ſtrong evidence of the truth of chriſtianity; as ſtrong as can be in the nature of things, till you experience it in your own ſoul: and this, though it be allowed they are but plain men, and, in general, of weak underſtanding; nay, though ſome of them ſhould be miſtaken in other points, and hold opinions which cannot be defended.

FINIS.